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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KCOR](#) [MI](#)  
SUBJECT: MULUZI RETURNS - HIS ARREST TO FOLLOW?

Classified By: Political Officer Tyler Sparks for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: Former President Bakili Muluzi returned to Malawi on July 9, after spending the last seven months in the U.K., ostensibly for medical care. In a speech given at the airport Muluzi disassociated himself with any impeachment attempt against President Mutharika, and told his supporters to look forward to 2009's presidential election. Embassy sources report that Muluzi plans to stay in Malawi for only three weeks before leaving for the U.S., where he plans to take up an academic position with Boston University. However, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) Director privately told Poloff that the ACB plans to question, then arrest, Muluzi "shortly" after his arrival in Malawi. It is not clear whether the ACB will be able to take action before Muluzi departs. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Over five thousand supporters met Muluzi at the airport in Blantyre, Malawi's commercial capital, on Sunday. Muluzi told the crowd to focus on the next election, instead of impeaching the current president, and claimed he would not run for president again in 2009. (Comment: We wonder whether that's the last word. There is no other viable candidate in the United Democratic Front (UDF). Most observers assume that Muluzi will in fact stand in the election.)

¶3. (C) At the official Fourth of July function Atupele Muluzi, a member of Parliament and the former President's son, told Embassy officials that his father would only be in Malawi for three weeks. Atupele Muluzi stated that the former President was conscious of the "impression that he was here to cause trouble, and wants to remove himself from the country to avoid that assumption." Atupele said that his father would be going to the U.S. to take up an offer from Boston University to join their faculty for one year as a visiting professor.

¶4. (C) At a meeting on June 27th ACB Director Gustaf Kaliwo told PolOff that the ACB is ready to move forward with six corruption charges against former President Muluzi. However, the ACB is still investigating a number of other charges, particularly those linked to a case involving Muluzi and the former Ambassador to Japan, John Chikago. The ACB would like to question Muluzi about his involvement in the case, and according to Kaliwo they hope to do so before they arrest him on the other charges. That said, Kaliwo did confirm that they plan to arrest Muluzi, and that they plan to do so sooner rather than later.

15. (C) Comment: We wonder whether some sort of deal has been reached between Muluzi and the government, trading Muluzi's continued absence from the country and moderation in his political comments for abstention from prosecuting him on corruption charges. Muluzi's return could serve to reinvigorate the UDF, which has been splintered and directionless since his departure, should he succumb to the expected intense pressure on him to stay in country and exercise his leadership role. Though he still seemed very much the political operator upon his arrival, he was very quick to allay concerns that he would be pushing for impeachment and dodged questions about giving up his role in politics in general.  
End Comment.

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